

An Analysis of the Factors That Influence Preservice Elementary Teachers' Developing Dispositions about Teaching All Children

Mary Mueller & Alisa Hindin
Seton Hall University

Introduction

In preparing teacher candidates to meet the challenges of teaching in the 21st century, it is not sufficient to focus on knowledge and skills. Teacher preparation programs also must focus on the moral and ethical responsibilities of preservice teachers (Wise, 2006). At a time in which national populations and school districts are becoming increasingly diverse, this focus becomes even more critical (Allard & Santoro, 2006). These moral and ethical dispositions, coupled with knowledge and skills, are critical to good teaching, especially for at-risk students, who include English language learners, students with learning difficulties or disabilities, and those from low-socioeconomic backgrounds (Mills, 2008).

Over the past decade, the field of teacher preparation has conducted research on and has debated the role of dispositions in preservice teachers. Even when ideal dispositions have been identified, they have no agreed-upon definitions as a foundation, which makes these dispositions difficult to measure. In developing our conceptual framework, we based our notion of quality teacher dispositions on Goodlad's (1991) concept of "practicing good stewardship" and use the term "social consciousness" to

Mary Mueller is an associate professor of educational studies at Seton Hall University. Her email address is mary.mueller2@shu.edu. Alisa Hindin is an associate professor of educational studies at Seton Hall University. Her email address is Alisa.hindin@shu.edu

represent the candidates' dispositions. We believe that socially conscious teachers act as stewards and leaders; understand, respect, and value diversity; and apply what they have learned about teaching to support diverse learners. We define diversity as encompassing ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and learning diversity. In addition, socially conscious teachers are active learners who continuously seek out information from all sources, including family, community, and more formal sources (Dworet & Bennett, 2002).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess and to determine the factors that influence dispositions. To assess dispositions, we developed a series of micro-case scenarios (Edwards, 2005). Allard and Santoro (2004) stated that part of our role as teacher educators is to afford teacher candidates with opportunities to help them reflect on their own perceptions through dialogue. Our prior research showed the effectiveness of using scenarios to assess dispositions (Mueller & Hindin, 2008), but we also sought to understand the factors that influence dispositions. In this article, we describe the ways in which we used scenarios and present the findings of the analysis of candidates' responses. We examine experiences that influence candidates' dispositions, the role that teacher education plays in dispositional development, and the ways in which these findings can inform teacher preparation programs in their efforts to prepare candidates to work with diverse students.

Theoretical Framework

In examining the influences on preservice teacher dispositions, we must first look at the notion of dispositions. In the early 1900s, Dewey suggested that teachers' dispositions have an effect on student achievement, and thus it is necessary to determine which dispositions are most effective with particular students (Richardson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Schussler (2006) describes dispositions as a "point of inception" for one's behavior and thought. Richardson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) noted that dispositions are not behaviors but rather are determiners of behaviors and represent the ways in which one views the world. The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) defined dispositions as "the principles, commitments, values, and professional ethics that influence attitudes and behaviors toward students, teachers, families, and communities" and stated that "dispositions are guided by beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes related to values that include per-

son-centeredness, honesty, fairness, responsibility, and social justice" (Richardson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 1).

Raths (2001) believes that teachers need opportunities to explore their current dispositions as well as to strengthen their dispositions in ways that would be supportive of students in their classrooms. For teacher educators, modeling ideal dispositions as well as having discussions that target the nature and origin of their dispositions can be helpful. Teacher candidates also can strengthen dispositions when they have field experiences that mirror positive beliefs about children and learning.

Our work is grounded in the notion that good teachers value diversity and know how to meet the needs of diverse learners. Villegas and Lucas (2002) presented six characteristics of culturally responsive teachers: (a) are socioculturally conscious, recognizing that they have their own viewpoint or way of perceiving reality based on their background; (b) take a positive approach to student differences and have high expectations for all students; (c) have efficacy, believing that they can make a difference in the ways in which schools serve children; (d) understand how learners build knowledge and can support this construction; (e) care about the lives of their students; and (f) use their understanding to design educational opportunities that build upon students' knowledge and promote their future growth. These six characteristics prepare teachers to lead culturally responsive and inclusive classrooms that are supportive of children and accepting of differences. To this end, teacher candidates need to learn content and pedagogical knowledge in a way that enable their flexible use, depending on learners' needs.

Darling-Hammond (2000) argues that the attitudes necessary for good teaching are not inherent and that teacher preparation programs need to provide experiences that help develop these attitudes. Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) offer a framework that emphasizes the role of teacher preparation communities in facilitating new teachers' understanding of teaching, learning, and children as well as in developing dispositions to guide this understanding and in supporting these new teachers in putting these objectives and beliefs into action in the classroom.

The literature addressing changes in preservice teachers' dispositions presents conflicting views. Some researchers suggest that preservice teachers' "pre-existing frames of reference" are often inflexible and ultimately prevent preservice teachers from gaining new perspectives about teaching (Patnaik, 1987; Patnaik & Vold, 1998), documenting only minor changes in candidates' beliefs. Many researchers concur with Lortie's (2002) notion of an "apprenticeship of observation" in that preservice teachers enter teacher preparation programs with already established beliefs about teaching and learning. Thus, Doppen (2007)

stated, “Teacher preparation rarely involves a dramatic conversion or transformation of perspectives as preservice teachers firm up the values and beliefs that will guide them as teachers” (p. 1). However, other research shows that the attitudes of preservice teachers can be influenced by the type of preparation that they receive (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000) and, while not dramatically transforming existing beliefs held by preservice teachers, do make them more reflective and effective teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

Candidates enter education programs with already established values, beliefs, and moral codes from their families and school experiences, which influence what they learn in their teacher education programs and the teachers that they ultimately become (Bennings et al., 2008). Often, however, these influences are not taken into account in assessing candidates’ developing dispositions (Mueller & O’Connor, 2007). However, because preservice candidates have very few teaching experiences to which to refer when developing their social consciousness (Holt-Reynolds, 1992), these influences need to be given more weight. We recognize that coursework may only influence of candidates’ dispositions in limited ways (Ball, 2000; Forlin, Tait, Carroll, & Jobling, 1999; Mueller & O’Connor, 2007; Ross & Smith, 1992). Research has shown, however, that field experiences exert a powerful influence on candidates’ developing dispositions (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2002) and that candidates often report more value in field experiences than in university courses (Campbell, Gilmore, & Cuskelley, 2003). These experiences do not guarantee changes in dispositions but are, nevertheless, worthwhile. For example, Lambe and Bonesb (2007) found evidence that positive attitudes toward inclusive practices were reinforced by preservice teacher participation in an inclusive classroom.

Research Question

To best prepare future teachers, we need to understand the relationship between candidates’ dispositions and their experiences in courses and field placements as well as whether these experiences help them to achieve our goal of becoming socially conscious teachers. To this end, the research question that guided our work is: What is the relationship between candidates’ dispositions and their experiences?

Methods

Context

Our teacher preparation programs reside in the College of Education

and Human Services in a small, Catholic university located in the tri-state region around New York City. The university is located in a diverse city and surrounded by several diverse, urban communities. Recently we merged our special education and regular education programs to create an integrated elementary and special education undergraduate program. The curriculum includes 10 elementary education courses, such as child curriculum and development and methods courses, which include methods for meeting the needs of diverse learners through pedagogical practices. In addition, candidates are required to take five special education courses in which they learn about specific disabilities and the strategies for best meeting the needs of students with those disabilities.

Candidates also take a number of courses that include topics related to diversity. Through this coursework, we assist them in reflecting on their beliefs and values as they pertain to teaching, learning, and children, while forming a vision of good teaching (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). During their freshman year, our candidates are introduced to the concept of social consciousness; the importance of acting as stewards/leaders; and understanding, respecting, and valuing diversity. Issues of diversity, such as race, culture, and language, are addressed through class discussions, readings, reflective writings, and debates (Cochran-Smith, 1991). The role of the teacher is investigated in relation to teaching diverse students and those with different learning styles, preferences, and needs. Candidates also are introduced to inclusion (laws and services provided), strategies for accommodating and supporting special needs students and their families, learning about specific disabilities, and meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse populations. Beginning in their sophomore year and continuing into their senior year, candidates build upon two aspects of social consciousness (stewardship/leadership and valuing diversity), while learning effective ways to apply educational practices to support diverse groups of learners. Candidates learn to build a sense of belonging and community among students and to create safe classrooms that welcome all learners. Through specific methods courses, candidates practice creating culturally responsive lessons (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and developing specific modifications and accommodations for individual students.

Candidates complete four field placements (72 hours per semester) before their final student teaching experience. At least one of these field placements is an urban setting. In addition, the majority of our placements involve inclusive classrooms, with students from diverse socioeconomic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds. In keeping with socially conscious practice, candidates are expected to model respect

and value for differences in the classroom and school community; adapt objectives and strategies to support learning for students with special needs; and use information about the context of students' lives, such as culture and language, to develop a richer learning environment for individuals and the class as a whole.

Participants

Candidates in our teacher preparation program are primarily Caucasian (88%), followed by 9% African American and less than 1% Hispanic and other ethnicities. A small percentage of candidates did not reveal their ethnicities. In this article, we report on the second cohort of students who participated in the case-study analysis during their sophomore and junior years. This cohort includes approximately 65 candidates, although this number varies as students add or drop the major during their four years of study. Overall, the students in this cohort had an average entering verbal SAT score of 576 and math score of 550. The average high school GPA for this group was 3.44. Only 6% of the cohort is male.

Data Sources

To best assess our candidates' dispositions for teaching, we have been using three data sources, specifically entry and exit surveys, field evaluations, and micro-case scenarios. Using a frame of "multiples of time, evidence and perspective" (Ball & Lampert, 1999), we propose that the dispositions of cohorts of education students can be measured over time using quantitative and qualitative methods. For the purposes of identifying the specific influences on candidates' dispositions, we focus this study on the micro-case scenarios. These scenarios pose case studies depicting a cooperating teacher and an intern, and each scenario describes a problematic teaching practice. Candidates are asked to find the problem in the scenario and to explain what they would do differently. In addition, they are asked to describe what influenced their responses (course work, field experiences, personal experiences based on education and/or family members).

Data Analysis

We analyzed the findings of the two scenarios presented below, with one focusing on inclusion in a literacy classroom and the other focusing on cultural stereotypes that occurred during a social studies lesson. The inclusion scenario was presented during candidates' first semester,

sophomore year, in which 60 students participated, and the cultural stereotype scenario was presented during their second semester, junior year, in which there were 45 participants. The discrepancy in samples size is due to the fact that the survey completion was voluntary and a differing number of candidates opted to participate.

Inclusion Scenario: Kristin is a sophomore intern in Mr. Kennedy's 10th grade English class. Periods three and four are inclusion classes and for the past two weeks she has observed Mr. Kennedy work with the majority of the class on *To Kill A Mockingbird*. The seven inclusion students sit at the back of the room with the special education teacher working on small group instruction tasks: sight words, reading comprehension, vocabulary development, etc. Noticing this pattern continuing in the third week, Kristin asks Mr. Kennedy during lunch if the special education students ever participate with the rest of the class. He tells her matter-of-factly that this is "better for them" because they won't understand the whole class discussion anyway.

Cultural Stereotypes Scenario: During a lesson on propaganda and WWII, a student intern was leading the class in a discussion of how propaganda was used against people, particularly the Japanese. In response to this idea one student stated, "The Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor; the Muslims attacked us, so who cares what names we call them? Most people probably hated the Japanese and still do, just like the Muslims." The student intern asked the class if anyone wanted to respond to this statement. One student began to explain that not all of the Japanese necessarily wanted to bomb America. At that point, the intern cut the student off explaining that the class needed to get the discussion of propaganda and World War II back on track and finish the lesson.

Candidates completed the scenario questions using Asset, an online survey tool developed at our university. Each scenario was followed by the following questions:

1. After reading the scenario, please explain what you perceive to be any problems in it and why you think that they are problems.
2. If you were in the classroom scenario described above, what might you do differently? For example, if you think the teacher could have tried a different approach or used a specific strategy, can you describe it?

3. When you read this scenario and wrote your response, did you draw on information from past or current classes?
4. When you read this scenario and wrote your response, did you draw on your field experiences?
5. If you answered “yes” to the previous question, briefly describe how you relate the scenario and your field experience.
6. When you read this scenario and wrote your response, did you draw on personal experiences based on your education or that of family members?
7. If you answered “yes” to the previous question, briefly describe how you relate the scenario and your personal experiences.

Scenario response data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. First, we looked at the percentage of candidates who identified each sentence in the scenario as a problem of social consciousness and candidates’ identification of the factors that influenced their responses. Percentages were calculated in regard to whether candidates drew from past or current classes, field experiences, and personal experiences. We also examined candidates’ responses to open-ended questions (items 1, 2, 5, and 7) and developed codes for qualitatively analyzing their responses (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Results

Dispositions about Inclusion

In examining the data from the inclusion scenario, we found that all of the candidates ($N=60$) were able to identify the problems in the inclusion scenario and to identify alternative options. Specifically, 93% of candidates reported that they drew on information from past or current classes, 55% from their field experiences, and 27% from personal experiences.

Teacher preparation courses. As noted, this scenario was administered during candidates’ first semester, sophomore year. The majority of candidates already had completed four education courses during their freshman year, *Introduction to Teaching*, *Child Development and Curriculum*, and *Diverse Learners I* and *Diverse Learners II*. The majority were enrolled in *Life in Inclusive Classrooms* and *Early Literacy*. Figure 1 includes a brief description of each of these courses. The majority of candidates noted that, when responding to the scenario, they drew on information acquired in *Diverse Learners I* (87%) and *Diverse Learners*

II (68%), and 60% referred to *Introduction to Teaching* (Note: this was a multi-choice question, and, as such, the percentages may add up to more than 100%).

Field placements. In analyzing the influence of field placement, we found one of two themes in the majority of the responses. Of the candidates, 30% reported experiencing the opposite (of what was described in the scenario) in their field placement classrooms; their cooperating teacher had a positive approach toward inclusion. For example, one candidate stated, “My field experience classroom has a few learners

Figure 1
Courses Required during Freshman and Sophomore Years

CPSY 1001 Diverse Learners and Their Families, Part I. Introduction to special education law, the referral and evaluation process, and definitions for federal and state disability classifications as well as the associated behavioral and learning characteristics for students within the areas. The overarching goal for the course is that candidates understand the terminology and general learning needs associated with disability areas while always keeping the person first in their perceptions and actions.

CPSY 1002 Diverse Learners and Their Families, Part II. This course builds upon the foundational knowledge related to special education law and classifications in CPSY 1001. Specifically, areas of service for individuals with disabilities and their families will be examined.

EDST 1001 Introduction to Teaching: The Profession. This introductory course explores the profession of education and the structure and organization of schools. Throughout the course, candidates reflect on attitudes, aptitudes, skills, and dispositions of successful teachers, while developing techniques for establishing healthy, positive relationships with children and families.

EDST 2001 Life in the Diverse Classroom. Life in the Diverse Classroom focuses on developing the skills, competencies, and attitudes needed for teaching and managing a classroom of diverse learners. Candidates will examine the nature of teaching, receive an overview of the elementary curriculum, learn strategies for working with diverse learners, and plan for effective instruction.

EDST 2004 Early Literacy for All Children. Early Literacy focuses on the teaching and acquisition of literacy in the early elementary years. The focus is knowledge of specific literacy skills such as phonics, sight words, oral reading fluency, reading comprehension, spelling and composition, and techniques for teaching reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

EDST 4000 Child Development and Curriculum. This course is designed for freshmen to enable them to understand the emotional, physical, cognitive, social, and moral development of the child. The course offers instruction on development from birth through adolescence.

who work slower than others. My cooperating teacher includes these students to the best of her ability and doesn't separate them."

Alternatively, 48% of candidates observed a practice similar to that described in the scenario in their field placement. They described their cooperating classrooms as not embracing inclusion and not treating students with special needs equally. For example, a candidate explained:

In my field experience, some of the same issues are raised in the classroom. My cooperating teacher sits all her special education inclusion students in the same groups/part of the classroom. I have observed that her special education students are often overlooked.

An interest in the ways in which our candidates interpret what they viewed in the field led us to develop another level of coding for responses that included observations of problematic practices. Of the 48% of candidates who experienced a field placement with unjust practices in regard to inclusion, we found that 56% of these candidates thought that the practice that they observed was problematic. In contrast, 44% of these candidates reported non-inclusion in their classrooms, but, when they described it, they justified their cooperating teachers' practice as being necessary or in the best interests of the non-included child/children. For example, one student explained:

I see this happening everyday in my classroom where we have three students who need extra help and are in special education classes throughout the day. They are at a different level of learning, but my teacher includes them as much as possible in the everyday activities that the class as a whole participates in. She knows that they cannot complete everything like the other students, but she allows them to try and gives them the extra guidance that they need.

Personal experiences. Candidates who related the scenario to personal experiences tended to think about their past school experiences (15%), volunteer work (23%), family members (38%), or parents (15%). The data were further classified into positive experiences with inclusion (12%) and negative experiences with inclusion (35%). The following is representative of candidates' description of positive experiences: "My little cousin has learning disabilities and I know she is in an inclusive classroom. I think this is good because she is with other students without disabilities and it works on her social skills." This contrasts with candidates' descriptions of negative experiences, as seen in the following:

My cousin was in a special education class about 10 years ago. They would take her out of the regular classroom and place her in a resource room. She never thought she was smart and because of this never went to college.

Dispositions about Cultural Stereotypes

All candidates ($N=45$) were able to identify the problem in the cultural stereotypes scenario and to identify alternative options. All candidates reported that they drew on information from past or current classes, 53% percent drew from their field experiences, and 49% from personal experiences.

Teacher preparation courses. The cultural stereotypes scenario was administered during candidates' second semester, junior year and, therefore, had completed all six courses as presented in Figure 1. The majority (71%) of candidates identified *Introduction to Teaching*, taken during their freshman year, as influencing their responses, and 44% identified *Life in Inclusive Classrooms*.

Field placements. Of the candidates, 33% described a negative encounter in their field placements that was similar to that of the scenario. One candidate stated, "I drew on experiences when the teacher in the classroom cut students off or was more worried about finishing her lesson instead of going over a valid point that a student was making." However, 30% of candidates noted observing a positive approach, as seen below:

I am currently in a placement in a school that is not very diverse. One student made a comment that was negative about other races. We talked about how that was wrong and about how we should not judge a book by its cover.

When responding to this scenario, none of the candidates condoned negative encounters (as was seen in the inclusion scenario); however, 12% of candidates reported that they would not feel comfortable leading discussions about stereotypes and would therefore end the conversation. For example, one student responded, "I know in my own experience I don't feel as comfortable leading discussions of that sort. I usually briefly explain why it's wrong and then move on."

Personal experiences. In regard to personal experiences, candidates described either prior experiences at school or family influences. Of the candidates, 60% drew on previous experiences in school (one described a negative personal experience), as seen below:

When I look back at high school and think of the things I learned the topics that I remember best were ones that came from impromptu learning. A question or belief was verbalized and as a class we learned more about the topic.

Additionally, 40% described family influences. For example, one candidate stated, “Older members of families still seem to hold some of the prejudices of the previous eras. It often comes up as family debates about similar topics brought up by such statements.”

Discussion

Role of Teacher Preparation Courses

Overall, most candidates reported that they drew upon material learned in their education classes when responding to both scenarios. In the responses for the inclusion scenario, the majority of the students (87% and 68%) drew on the material learned in the two different courses that focused on diverse learners. Thus, early on in their education, candidates are gaining information that is helping them to think about diverse classroom settings. With this in mind, we recognize that, to support their developing social consciousness, we need to address the knowledge and dispositions that preservice teachers have about inclusion (Boling, 2007).

In responding to the cultural stereotypes scenario, nearly three-quarters (71%) drew on the *Introduction to Teaching* course and a little less than half (44%) drew on the *Life in the Inclusive Classroom* course. Although these classes were taken during their first semester, freshman and sophomore years, the candidates retained the material in such a way that it influenced their responses. This finding counters the literature that suggests that teacher education programs are ineffective at addressing issues of diversity (McDonald, 2005).

Due to the nature of the instrument, we were not able to determine the influence that college preparation courses have on teacher candidates’ dispositions, which can be considered a limitation of this study. With future cohorts, we will restructure this question, making it follow the same format as the questions about field experiences and personal experiences. Another limitation in studying the effects of coursework involves the potential for “parroting” (Hoffman, 1996), whereby candidates feel that there is one right way to think about inclusion (cultural stereotypes) and thus mimic the perceived acceptable responses (Boling, 2007).

Role of Field Experiences

Over half of the candidates reported drawing on their prior field experiences when responding to the inclusion (55%) and the cultural stereotypes scenarios (53%). This may be indicative of the number of experiences and types of classrooms in which candidates are placed.

Candidates complete four field experiences, which include one urban setting and at least one special education setting. In addition, the majority of the schools where candidates are placed practice full inclusion. However, only 30% reported experiencing positive dispositions toward inclusion in their internship classrooms, and only 30% reported that they witnessed positive reactions to issues of cultural stereotypes. These results align with research that suggests that many practicing teachers are ill-prepared to teach in inclusive classrooms (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Goodlad & Field, 1993). Further, research conducted by Symeonidou and Phtiaka (2009) in Greece found that teachers' initial education and inservice training do not provide them with inclusive attitudes, and many still believe that some students should not be included. In addition, in studies in multiple countries, the results have shown that teachers have conflicting beliefs about the effectiveness of inclusion (Zoniou-Sideri & Vlachou, 2006).

These results are of concern in the face of research that shows that experienced and newly certified teachers see clinical experiences as a powerful, sometimes the single most important, component of teacher preparation. The power of the field experiences might partially explain why almost half of candidates who experienced a negative approach toward inclusion in their placements rationalized it as necessary to their particular setting. Their rationalizations were based on the fact that their cooperating teacher sometimes included the students or was unsure of how to include some students, or that the practice of inclusion was impossible in extreme cases. Others suggested that it was good for the students to not be included and explained that either the students did not care or that they were treated "like equals" when they were pulled out.

Whether field experiences enhance the quality of teacher preparation may depend on the particular experience (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2002). We believe, however, that candidates can learn "what not to do" from these negative experiences if their program adequately addresses these experiences. The responses show that students are more likely to experience negative actions in regard to cultural stereotypes in the field (33%) as compared to positive actions; only 30% reported experiencing an event that depicted a positive approach to cultural stereotypes.

In this age of social justice, teachers may be more cautious about how they approach stereotypes in the classroom, which would lower the incidence of negative experiences, or, based on their own discomfort, teachers may stay away from addressing this subject in the classroom. Candidates' responses suggested that they were aware of the diversity that existed in the classroom and needed to be sensitive to the differences of their students. This acknowledgement is important at a time when

student populations are growing more diverse, while teacher candidates are becoming more homogeneous (Causey, Thomas, & Armento, 2000). Given all of the coursework on diversity in our program, we were disappointed to learn that a small percentage of candidates reported that they are not comfortable talking about stereotypes in the classroom. This is in keeping with the findings of Hollins and Guzman (2005), who stated:

Studies of candidates' predispositions and attitudes toward diversity had mixed results. Although teacher candidates were generally open to the idea of cultural diversity, they lacked confidence in their ability to do well in diverse settings and many preferred not to be placed in situations where they felt uncomfortable and inadequate. (p. 483)

Role of Personal Experiences

Lortie (1975) stated that the predispositions with which candidates enter preparation programs are more influential than is their future coursework or teaching experiences. In this regard, our data showed mixed findings. The results for the two scenarios were very different in the area of personal experiences. Only 27% of the candidates reflected upon their past personal experiences when responding to the inclusion scenario, while 49% did so in response to the cultural stereotype scenario. This discrepancy may be due to the fact that our candidates were less likely to see inclusion in practice or they may not have been aware that their classrooms were inclusive. In comparison, candidates have experienced cultural stereotypes in their own schooling and in family discussions. In responding to the inclusion scenario, 35% of the candidates described negative experiences with inclusion, usually involving the treatment of a family member. Conversely, only 12% shared positive past experiences, and these were usually reflections of parents in the role of teachers.

Concluding Remarks

Our goal is to prepare socially conscious teachers who reflect our college's vision of stewardship, valuing of difference, and effective employment of a range of approaches and materials in the classroom to support all learners. To do this, it is imperative that we understand what influences these dispositions. Research on preservice teachers indicates that what they learn in their education courses often does not transfer to classroom teaching (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985). According to Ball and Cohen (1999), "Even when they aim high, preservice teacher education offers a weak antidote to the powerful socialization into teaching that occurs in teachers' own prior experience as students" (p. 5). Our

findings indicate, however, that teacher preparation courses can make a difference in teacher candidates developing dispositions. We found that teacher preparation courses were the most influential factor in influencing candidates' responses to issues of diversity. We have evidence of which classes candidates believed influenced their responses, but further research and adaptation of the survey instrument is needed to understand the extent to which their coursework influenced their responses.

Research suggests that preservice teachers are often most influenced by what they see their cooperating teachers do or by their own memories, and often these teacher models are not ideal (Barker & Burnet, 1994; Conner & Killmer, 1995). Our research suggests that candidates' field experiences have mixed impacts on their situational responses. Only about half of the candidates drew on experiences from the field when responding to both scenarios. Further, these experiences were often described as negative and may have stunted candidates' developing dispositions rather than support them.

Our challenge is twofold. We need to pull from these experiences in our coursework and to use them as reflection tools in helping teacher candidates to develop and maintain social consciousness. In addition, we need to strive to align candidates' field experiences with the mission of our university. We are asking our candidates to practice good stewardship and to become socially conscious practitioners, and thus we are obligated to find better examples of cooperating teachers who possess these characteristics. This is especially significant in light of research that shows that preservice teachers' dispositions toward inclusion can affect their success or failure with inclusion when they become teachers (Tait & Purdie, 2000).

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